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CEREMONIES

ON OCCASION OF THE

PRESENTATION OF THE SWORDS,

VOTED

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN E. WOOL,

BY

THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TROY,

THE LEGISLATURE OF NEW YORK,

AND

THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD ARNOLD,

1st Lieut. 3rd Art. A. D. C. to Gen. Wool.

TROY, N. Y.:
A. W. SCRIBNER AND CO., PRINTERS, CANNON PLACE.
1860.

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GIFT
HISPANIC SOCIETY
OF AMERICA
AUG. 4, 1941

TO

MRS. JOHN E. WOOL.

MADAM:

To comply with your expressed wish, to have a complete description of the Swords presented General Wool, I have compiled the following pages, adding, as I could not doubt it would prove valuable and interesting, a full account of the ceremonies of their presentation, which I have the honor of dedicating to yourself.

With the sincere hope that my humble endeavors may meet with your approbation.

I am,

With sentiments of the highest esteem and regard,

Your most obedient and much obliged servant,

RICHARD ARNOLD,

1st Lieut. 3rd Art.,

Aide-de-Camp.

TROY, N. Y.,

June 1st, 1860.

40662

CITY SWORD.

PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS, WHICH WERE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TROY, N. Y., APRIL 8, 1848.

Whereas, the Common Council of the city of Troy, have (in common with their fellow citizens,) had the great gratification of hearing from all quarters, of the courage and gallant bearing of our townsman, Brigadier General JOHN E. WOOL, during the hard-fought and nobly-won field of BUENA VISTA—

Therefore, *Resolved*, That General WOOL has fully justified and sustained the high opinion always entertained among us, of his character as an accomplished soldier; and that his courage and conduct at Buena Vista, amply fulfill the bright promise of his first feat of arms, at Queenstown.

Resolved, That, feeling a just pride in his renown, and desiring to testify our high regard for both the citizen and the soldier; we, in the name of the CITY OF TROY, present to him a SWORD, as a testimonial of the place he occupies in the esteem of those who have known him so long and so well; and as a memorial, (though not a reward,) of the distinguished services he has rendered to the country.

Resolved, That a committee of four persons be appointed by the Mayor, two from the Common Council, and two from the citizens generally, to carry into effect the foregoing resolution.

Civic and Military Ceremonies of the Presentation in the City of Troy, August 23, 1848.

At an early hour yesterday, the streets were thronged with people from the country, and with our own citizens, all animated in view of the grand pageant of the day.

The morning cars brought in the following Military Companies from abroad:

Albany Republican Artillery, . .	*Capt. Fredendall.*
Albany Washington Rifles, . . .	" *Triegler.*
New York City Guards, ...	" *McArdle.*
Syracuse Citizens' Corps, ...	" *Minard.*
Utica Citizens' Corps, ...	" *Hart.*
Saratoga Artillery, ...	" *Plunkett.*
Schenectady Artillery, ...	" *Springer,*

who were received and escorted to their various quarters at our hotels, by the Troy Citizens' Corps, Capt. Pierce, and Troy City Artillery, Capt. Brintnall, where arrangements had been made for their entertainment.

The various companies appeared in fine spirits and beautiful uniforms. Among the Bands were

Kellogg's Brass Band, ...	*Syracuse.*
Cook's Brass Band, ...	*Albany.*
Aricott's Brass Band, ...	*Utica.*
Schenectady Brass Band.	
U. S. Arsenal Band, ...	*West Troy.*
U. States' Band, ...	*Governor's Island.*
Forrester's Brass Band, ...	*Lansingburgh.*

Among the military of rank and distinction present, were, of the Staff of Gen. Wool, Adj. Gen. Winship, and aides McLean and Totten.

The Governor's Staff: Adj. Gen. Stevens, Col. Van Vechten and Col. Carman, of Albany; Gen. Storms, of New York, and Staff; Major Bogart, Maj. Mumford, and Morgan;

Major Baker and Staff from the Arsenal;

Major Gen. Cooper and Staff from Albany.

And Hon. Millard Fillmore, and Hon. C. Morgan, of the State Department.

Long before the hour for the review of the military at the residence of Gen. Wool, thousands of citizens and strangers had crowded around his residence, entirely filling the streets on every side, all anxious to obtain a view of him. Hundreds of his old and personal friends rushed into his house to congratulate him upon his return and to welcome him home. Here the scene was truly interesting, showing as it did the warm friendship and sincere regard of gentlemen from various parts of the country, whose acquaintance had extended through many years, and had been strengthened by the many evidences of personal worth those years had furnished. It was a meeting of pure and noble hearts.

The General appeared to be in good health, with the exception of a slight cold, and with his intelligent and amiable lady, were assiduous in their attentions to the numerous friends who called upon him.

At eleven o'clock the military and citizens appeared at the residence of General Wool, where he was addressed by General J. J. Viele, as follows, followed by immense cheering:

GEN. VIELE'S ADDRESS.

Maj. Gen. Wool: Permit me, sir, in behalf of the Military here assembled, representing the Citizen Soldiery of the Empire State, to congratulate and welcome you, on your safe return. Since you parted with us last, you have passed through scenes of trial, of arduous duty, and imminent danger. We have watched your course with almost agonizing interest. Yet we felt confidently assured, from your early history and former services, that in your hands the interests and honor of your Country would be secure. The ardor and enthusiasm with which you rallied at the call of your Country, during the second war of Independence—the heroic courage, the manly fortitude and matured judgment, displayed by the then

youthful Officer of the line—was an earnest of what we expected, and have realized, from the veteran Commander. The heights of Queenstown and the plains of Beekmantown are your earlier jewels. The bloody Saranac will never cease to murmur your praises. Your recent services in a distant country, incurring the dangers of pestilence and sword—your indefatigable exertions in mustering a large army, and transforming them so rapidly, from raw recruits to disciplined soldiers—the expedition with which you performed a long and tedious march through a hostile wilderness *world*,—calls for our marked approbation. But that which, above all else, challenges our fondest admiration, and is your crowning glory, is your conduct on the proud field of Buena Vista!

Although you return to us war-worn and fatigued, and your brow has become brown, your locks gray, yet the laurels which surround and adorn them will be green when all else fades and crumbles. You have erected a monument to your own fame, which shall last while virtue is rewarded and patriotism has a friend.

For these distinguished services, we greet you with this military compliment. We have here with us, the representatives of the Empire City and of western New York; united we offer you the humble tribute of our grateful hearts. Your history, services, and success, prove to us that there is security for our Country, and protection for our rights, in the intelligence and patriotism of a Citizen Soldiery. They are additional evidences that Military Genius depends not entirely upon the schools. Like poetry, painting, and sculpture, it is the endowment of Nature—it is the gift of God.

In conclusion, for time will not permit me to go into detail, allow me, again to bid you welcome, thrice welcome, "war's conquering Hero, home!"

To this address the General made the following brief and pertinent reply:

But yesterday, I was amidst the enemies of my country; to-day, I am surrounded by the friends of my youth and and the associations of many happy years. To the soldier who has devoted his whole life to his duty, no reward can equal the sympathy of friends.

The noble manner in which I have been sustained by my native State, and particularly by the citizens of Troy, has filled me with the deepest emotion; so much so, that I feel utterly incapable of expressing the dictates of a grateful heart.

Receive my thanks, sir, for the flattering manner in which you have alluded to my services in the last war, and in that which has just closed. Whatever I was fortunate enough to perform in the former, now belongs to the history of the past,—in the latter, it has been my good fortune to be associated with one of its most extraordinary battles. I see, sir, in the citizen-soldiery here present, the same kind of force that gained the day in that unequal struggle. The volunteers on that field sustained the glory of their country in one of its darkest hours; and finally, though attacked by forces so far superior that to resist was thought madness by some, after the most heroic sacrifices, gained a victory unsurpassed by any of the war. The battle of Buena Vista must teach our country that its strength lies in her sons; that in the hour of danger the citizen-soldier is able and willing to face the enemy either on our own soil, or in a foreign land; and that its honor and glory can be entrusted implicitly to his care.

After the military were reviewed by General Wool, amidst the most enthusiastic cheers, from the vast concourse assembled; the escort was formed in front of the Court House, and took up its march down Second street to Division street, up Division to First, up First to the quarters of General Wool, where he was received into the line.

The procession then proceeded through the principal streets to the Court House, where the committee of one hundred citizens, and the Common Council, received the General at the hands of the joint committee, with immense cheers from the warm hearts of at least 40,000 people!

As soon as the companies could be arranged, the General was conducted to his stand on a platform erected for the purpose in front of the Court House, and he was then addressed by GEORGE GOULD, Esq., in behalf of the citizens of Troy, as follows:

MR. GOULD'S ADDRESS.

SIR: You are once more among your fellow citizens; and they who have known you long and well, are thronging to welcome you. Yet for the public expression of that welcome they can have but one voice; and I am honored in being selected to give it utterance:—a task as difficult as it is honorable; for

"*Silence*, is the perfectest herald of joy."

The manner in which one is, and should be greeted, on his return, depends upon many circumstances;—the length of his absence; the distance of his place of sojourn; his employment while away; the security, or the danger, that was about his path. And when time has been lengthened, and distance increased; and deeds have been noted, and dangers have been rife; then the return is anxiously looked for; the greeting is eager and warm; and the grasp of the hand is, as if it would *retain*, what had been well nigh lost;—and yet is *not* lost, but *with us*.

In this view, whose return more than yours, deserves from us a reception as public as it is exulting? The call to duty did not find you sleeping; and the promptness with which the summons to arms was answered, would, in most men, have been remarkable. And yet the nature of your employment would seem to have been, to a tried soldier, the most irksome, as it surely was the most thank-

less. You were called, not to the field, where "the shouts of battle and the shock of arms," give to war its splendor, and to man his fame; but to the bare hill-side, which *you* were to *make* a camp; to the raw volunteers,—unclothed, unprovided for, untaught,—whom *you* were to transform into soldiers. And not merely this; but those volunteers bred in a freedom that had hardly heard of law, ignorant of all discipline, chafing at restraint, impatient of control. Further; they were to be trained, as they marched on to their destination; and every day added to the numbers of the motley band, and increased your labors.

The difficulties of such a march, within our own territory, were sufficiently arduous. But when the frontier was reached, the path of duty was still onward; and still on, and on, the wilderness stretched its weary way; and beyond it lay the hostile country, and the foe. Rare are the instances, (if, indeed, there be *any*,) of such a march as yours; conducted with order, with dispatch, and above all, *absolutely without loss.* Nor is this all: at its termination, the forces, (at starting so ill-appointed and untamed,) came forth a well regulated army, ready and able to stand the fiery brunt of battle with the courage and conduct of veterans. The system and the discipline that had been traduced, that had been met by disaffection, and almost mutiny, were tried in the hour of peril,and were *not* found wanting.

Well was it for your fame, that the counsels which would have overruled you, and caused a retreat to Monterey, were themselves overruled, and your head-quarters were fixed at Agua Nueva. But for that, though *our* confidence would have been undiminished, the world would have failed to do you justice; and a reluctant Government might not have been compelled to give to distinguished services, their late reward.

Prior to this period, though everything you attempted had been done, and done well; though your administra-

tive course was so admirable that you kept the inhabitants of a hostile country your friends, while they feared the army of their countrymen—yet fortune had thrown in your way no opportunity for any of those splendid achievements which take possession of the public mind, by storm. And the mass of the people never know, or think, of the every day generalship that is required to keep a large force together, and maintain them in a sound, serviceable condition, so that the time of action finds them, in all things prepared, and with nothing to prevent their using their strength and courage to the best advantage. In a late history of Nelson's wonderful career, it has been said, (while speaking of the training and disciplining of his crew,) "It is the secret mechanism of that silent and gradual work, which we must investigate; for we must study Nelson *organizing his fleet*, ere we can understand his fighting with such successful rashness. We must examine the means, before we can comprehend the end;" —adding, that his personal attention to *every minute detail* was what made his whole so perfect. Such were the means that triumphed at the Nile, and at Trafalgar; and where is the victory that has been won without them? If the world's great Admiral found his fame from having used these means, where is the hero that would not gladly be honored for the same cause?

And such claim to honor you have. The materials out of which a great proportion of the conquerors at Buena Vista were formed, came to your hands in a state almost of chaos; and by your hourly, constant care, were fitted for the horrors, the struggles, and the result of that bloody field. But not this, only, is your due. The selection of the battle ground,—this, "new Thermopylæ" was yours. Advanced beyond it to the edge of the desert—that your ear might be first to catch the sound of the coming war—that the foe might have brief resting space from his toilsome march—you waited the approach of an enemy, whose numbers and appointments lost nothing in the

rumors that reached you. Well might the proudest and best army that Mexico ever sent forth, think that the small band which, at first, retreated from them, was panic-stricken, and needed but to be pursued, to be swallowed up; and more assured than ever, they poured on to the pass—but to find that

> "The man, that once did sell the lion's skin
> While the beast lived, was killed with hunting him."—

At the appointed spot the retreat was stayed. The time and the place had come, to

> "Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood;—
> To set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide,
> Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit.
> To his full height."

If anything but such an occasion had been needed, to Americans it was supplied by the *day*. It was *the 22d day of February!*—The watch-word was, "THE MEMORY OF WASHINGTON." Here, it was pledged, standing, uncovered, and in silence:—There, amid the cannon's thunder it was pledged to the brim, *in blood*. It is needless here to recount the varying fortunes of those two eventful days, or the part you, personally, bore in them all. They are written in our annals, in characters not to be effaced. Outnumbered, hemmed in, almost ridden down, our men *could not be beaten*. Hour by hour their numbers lessened; but the remnant, bleeding and torn as they were, had no thought of flight. And when the enemy at last recoiled; and at night fled, defeated, disorganized, disbanded, the victors were too few to gather the spoil, much too few to think of effective pursuit. Yet, for *that* foe, the war was ended.

The world has chronicled no field better fought. And they who won it, (as well the survivors, as they for whom there is no return) need no more of martial renown.

God grant, that henceforth, forever, America see no more of war,—the bloodiest, fiercest, saddest tragedy the world ever sees. Yet if it must come, we could desire for it no prouder record than that of Buena Vista.

Of your peril we were not ignorant: Rumor magnified its approach, foretold your destruction; and finally said, that destruction had come. We hoped for,—yes, we *believed* we should hear,—a different tale; and were not unprepared to join in the exulting shout sent up by the land, when the "earthquake voice of victory" reached our ears.

Since then, we have been waiting for this day. Others have returned, to tell their stories, "and show how fields were won;" but your high responsibilities have kept you away. And, now, you are come, only when the general's last duty has been fully done: Your troops have been embarked;—have reached their own shores; have been disbanded; and at length you are here.

Guided by a merciful Providence, through thousands of miles, you have been, for two years, exposed to every vicissitude of season and of climate; to "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day;" and in, and through all;—in the tent, and in the field;—from mountain to shore;—you have been protected: And you are *at home.*

What more shall I say? That we are here, says all; and, better than I can, tells how truly you are welcome.

Mr. Gould was frequently interrupted by heartfelt cheers from the assembled people, and the glistening tears in the eyes of the gallant General evinced the deep emotion of his brave heart, while listening to the high eulogiums it bestowed.

The Hon. Francis N. Mann, Mayor, then came upon the stand and addressed the General as follows:

THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS.

Major General Wool:—The circumstances under which we meet are peculiar and awaken a lively interest. More than two years have passed away, since we have enjoyed the pleasure of greeting you as our friend and neighbor.

In the meantime what stirring scenes, what interesting incidents, what severe trials have you passed through. Death, unconquerable death, has dealt destruction and piled up its trophies around you, and many, very many gallant spirits, who commenced the campaign with hopes as bright, and prospects as fair as any that have survived it, have gone to their eternal home.

It would be strange indeed, if, when meeting under such circumstances, possessing as they do, so many and such thrilling incidents, we should not express what we cannot but feel, our sincere gratitude, to a kind and beneficent Providence, for his goodness and mercy in protecting your valuable life from the dangers incident to an inhospitable and infectious climate and a cruel war, and restoring you in safety to the bosom of your anxious family and the embrace of your friends.

We are indeed grateful for the privilege that we now enjoy, of greeting your safe arrival to your home, the city of your adoption. And, be assured, General, that we have at all times, since you last left us, felt a lively interest, an anxious solicitude for your health and safety, and have ever (in our minds) participated in all your marches and battles, as well as in the brilliant success that has so signally crowned your efforts.

You have, by your skill and valiant conduct, during two wars, embracing a period of more than thirty years, entwined your brow with the *unfading laurels* of a truly *noble* and *distinguished soldier ;* and whether in peace or in war, at home or abroad, promptness, energy and perseverence, have ever characterized and distinguished your conduct.

In the summer of 1846, with only a few hours notice, you obeyed your country's call, and clad in its armour, marched under the stripes and stars to the field of duty. From that time to the present, you have unceasingly devoted your time and talents to the service of your country.

Within six weeks after you were ordered on this duty, 12,000 volunteers, armed and equipped, were mustered into service, under your command, and were on their way to Mexico. Nine thousand of whom, arrived at Matamoras in time to join Gen. Taylor's army, before he moved on Monterey.

In December following, your invincible army, consisting of about 3,000 volunteers, encamped in front of Parras, a town containing 9,000 inhabitants. Thus, after a march of more than 800 miles from La Vaca, in an enemy's country; encountering streams, mountains, and other formidable obstacles, incident to a new and comparatively unknown region, you arrived at Parras without accident or injury, and without meeting an enemy to interrupt your valorous troops in their progress. During all this protracted and severe march the strictest order and discipline were observed—and your camp was a school of instruction and practice. Thus in the short space of a few months, raw recruits from the plough and counter, were made veteran troops, cool, brave, and invincible in battle, and not surpassed even, by those of the regular army.

Though in an *enemy's* country,*his* rights were respected, and an equivalent paid for all your supplies. The morals of your army were preserved by exacting and doing justice by all, and your enemies were conquered and made friends, by your *justice, clemency and humanity.* And be assured, General, that *such a victory, is more honorable to the victor*, than the *most brilliant blood-bought battles, fought in Mexico.*

While at Parras you were notified of the advance of the enemy upon Saltillo, your column was again in motion, and marched 120 miles in less than four days, making your entire march in Mexico, from La Vaca to Saltillo, 1000 miles.

The enemy did indeed advance, with an army exceeding 20,000 of his most experienced and best drilled troops,

commanded by their ablest generals. Opposed to this formidable force was our army numbering less than 5,000.

We have not time to refer even, to the leading incidents of the memorable battle of Buena Vista. And indeed it is unnecessary, as they are so recent, fresh and familiar to us all. But how can we do justice to the intrepidity of the American Army on that occasion, in which you and your command acted such a distinguished part? The stirring events of that protracted and severe battle, will ever claim a bright page in our country's history, and the memories of those brave men, who there died in the service of their country, as well as those that survived that terrible conflict, will never be forgotten.

To you belongs the signal honor, of selecting the battle field, and disposing the troops, in order of battle. To you also, belongs the honor of disciplining and instructing them, in the art of war, preparatory to the conflict. And during that eventful battle, none were more vigilant,active and gallant. Oh, who can realize the thrilling anxiety which at that moment occupied your mind, both for the safety of your command, and the glory and honor of your country.

The commanding General has indeed done you justice. His words are few, but at the same time,so just and truthful, that I beg leave to adopt them.

"To Brigadier General Wool my obligations are "especially due. The high state of discipline and instruc- "tion, of several of the volunteer regiments, was attained "under his command; and to his vigilance and arduous "service, before the action, and his gallantry and activity "on the field, a large share of our success may justly be "attributed."

This is well said, and that too, by the right person, in the right spirit, at the right time, and in the right place. It is recorded by an eye witness; by one capable of judging; and its record will exist, when the actors have gone to their final account. We cannot but admire the noble heart, that has so magnanimously awarded to you

such signal and well merited praise.—Long, very long, may you live, and enjoy this distinction. It is your own. —Your courage, self-devotion, and perseverance, have purchased it, and the grateful heart of a generous and devoted people, will freely award to you, what you have so nobly and justly won.

And now, General, it only remains for me to discharge a duty imposed upon me by the Common Council of the city of Troy, of bidding you, as I now do, in their name, an affectionate and a heartfelt welcome, to the city of your adoption.

The SWORD was here delivered to His Honor the Mayor, by its bearer, the Marshal; and the Mayor then addressed the General as follows:—

Major General Wool—In behalf, and at the request, of the Common Council of the city of Troy, and of my fellow-citizens, and the committee appointed to procure a sword; it becomes my duty, as it certainly is my pleasure, to present to you this Sword, as a memorial of their high estimation of your merits, both as a citizen and a soldier.

The circumstances under which it has been procured, are highly complimentary to you. The news of the advance of a formidable Mexican army, exceeding 20,000, under the command and inspired with the enthusiasm of their favorite General, against our comparatively small force, being less than 5,000, chiefly volunteers, never in battle, unskilled and unpractised in the art of war, filled our minds with fearful apprehensions, for the safety and success of our Army.

After several days of intense anxiety, the good news finally reached us, not only that our invincible Army had achieved a brilliant victory over the combined and best disciplined Mexican forces, at the ever memorable battle of Buena Vista, but that the life of our fellow citizen, whom we delight to honor, was safe; and that he, by his valiant conduct, had greatly distinguished himself.

Our Common Council at a special meeting, called for the purpose of testifying their respect for you and your valorous conduct, unanimously resolved to procure a sword, to be presented as a memorial of their high appreciation of you, both as an intelligent and much respected fellow citizen, and as a brave and gallant soldier.

Our citizens however, not less anxious to testify their respect for you, claimed the privilege of paying for it, limiting each subscription to one dollar, that all might participate in doing honor to one, who had so signally honored and served his country. And be assured General, that it is the spontaneous free-will offering of a generous and rejoicing people. We are indeed grateful, for your valuable services in our country's cause, and we greatly rejoice, that a kind Providence has watched over and protected your life, through the dangers incident to two wars, and has ever given you victory over our enemies.

Now therefore, in consideration of the high esteem we entertain for you, as a worthy, intelligent and *much respected citizen;* and as a *brave and gallant soldier;* and especially, in consideration of your *valiant conduct, at the ever memorable battles of Buena Vista, Queenstown Heights and Plattsburgh*, and those *high moral qualities*, ever exhibited during your eventful campaign in Mexico; which enabled you *to conquer and take military possession of several large cities, and towns without firing a gun, and make friends of your enemies by your clemency* and *humanity;* I, in behalf of the Common Council, of the city of Troy, and of my fellow citizens, do present to you, this beautiful SWORD. Of itself, it is indeed a feeble tribute to such exalted worth, and such distinguished services. But accompanied as it is, with the grateful heart of a generous and rejoicing people—highly appreciating your merits and gallant services,—you will please to accept it, and may it never! no never!! be drawn, but in the defence of the *justice, the liberty, the honor, and the glory of our country.* And when drawn, may it never be sheathed, until *the*

justice, the liberty, the honor and glory of our country have been justly vindicated.

After which the sword, which was a splendid and costly one, with gold scabbard and appropriate devices, representing the military history of the General, was presented to him, amid the cheers of the procession.

The following is the description of the sword.

An uncommonly rich sword has been manufactured for the citizens of Troy, by Ball, Tompkins & Black, to be presented to Gen. Wool, in compliment to his gallantry at Buena Vista.—It is a Roman sword, thoroughly classical in style, and surpassingly elegant, broad and straight, about two feet four inches long, and looks as if made to be used by a warrior, rather than to be worn by a carpet-knight. The hilt is surmounted with a Roman helmet. On its sides are figures of Hercules and Mars.—The wings of the American Eagle are outspread beneath the guard, and on the guard is the following appropriate inscription:

"Presented by the Common Council and Citizens of Troy, N. Y., to their townsman Brigadier General JOHN E. WOOL, as a token of their personal esteem and of their high appreciation of his gallantry and military ability, as displayed on the bloody field of Buena Vista, the 22d and 23d day of February, 1847."

The scabbard is richly engraved with battle scenes, arms and banners, and other suitable devices, and bears the following impressive inscription.

"QUEENSTOWN, Oct. 13, 1812. PLATTSBURGH, Sept. 11, 1814. BUENA VISTA, Feb. 22 and 23, 1847.

The design was furnished by Brown, the sculptor, and its cost could not have been less than $1,000.

The General was then led to the stand, and although deeply affected by the enthusiastic manner in which his return had been noticed, and the welcome given him, yet he addressed the citizens, military and committees, with deep feeling and with great felicity, frequently interrupted by the most deafening applause, as follows:

GEN. WOOL'S REPLY.

Friends, Fellow-Citizens, and Soldiers:

On my return from the war in Mexico, I find myself in your midst, unexpectedly in a new sphere of action. I find myself engaged in the delightful but difficult task of responding to those spontaneous outpourings of the heart—those cordial and enthusiastic receptions which have greeted me, since my arrival in my native State. I had anticipated a welcome from my friends; but such a welcome as I received on landing in this city, and such as is now indicated in this vast assemblage, I neither anticipated, nor can venture to claim, for mere public services. Much of it can only be ascribed to your partiality, to long standing associations, to the companions of my youth, and the associates of maturer years, whom I recognize before me, and whose steadiness of friendship and kindness has never failed to cheer and animate me in the darkest hour. —Such friendship has been especially dear to me during my more than two years' absence; for, there have been times, when, in the full consciousness of directing all the energies I possessed to the public good and the honor of my country, I found myself in situations when the encouraging voice of friendship was needed to cheer me under the heavy responsibilities which I was struggling to discharge. In the execution of those duties, I was sure to incur the displeasure of the discontented, and of those who could not appreciate the necessity of discipline. It would not have been difficult to flatter the love of indulgence and of ease, and to present the column I had organized and brought into the field of battle, in the garb, without the *discipline* of soldiers. But those who were at first most loud in their complaints, for my refusing to listen to that syren voice of popularity which would have extricated me, at once, from a labyrinth of unpleasant service, were the first in their acknowledgments, when convinced by the trial of a battle, of the mercy I had shown them, in the very rigor I exacted to prepare them for the contest.

To you, the Chief Magistrate of this beautiful and enterprising city—my home and residence; and to you, the respresentative of the voice of its citizens, I make my grateful acknowledgments, for the complimentary manner in which you have been pleased to present this splendid sword, as the common gift of the city, and of its citizens individually. I receive it with a depth of gratitude which cannot be expressed by words. It is the testimonial of my own neighbors—my countrymen at home. It is the symbol of their appreciation of my character as a citizen and soldier. Could ambition seek a higher reward? Could pride enjoy a nobler triumph? I can truly say, that I am more than compensated by this magnificent presentation and reception—this warm, glowing and heartfelt greeting, for all the toil, hardships, and dangers, to which I have been exposed since I entered upon the duties that called me to Mexico.

The sword which I have received, I shall hold as the dearest gift of my life.—If my country should again need my services in the field, and should not this arm become, by age, too feeble to raise itself, in vindication of the national rights, your confidence, as implied in this gift, shall be sustained to the fullest extent of my ability.

It is not necessary for me to follow the tenor of your addresses, by recapitulating the course of my action in the two wars to which you have alluded. History has recorded the events of the first. The future historian will embody the materials of the last.

In reference, however, to the battle of Buena Vista, to which you have so flatteringly alluded, my services prior to and during that engagement, are sufficiently noticed in the official language of the commanding General, which you have quoted. And I agree with that distinguished officer, that "a soldier's share," is all that need be claimed in the glories of that memorable conflict.

Citizen Soldiers: It gives me pleasure to witness, this day, the beautiful order, equipment and appointment

which you have displayed. We are an armed Republic, but our arms are in our own hands. We stand ready to defend the public Liberty, because it is our own. The World is awakened to the fact that a citizen-soldiery constitutes their own government, the strongest on earth. No large standing armies are here necessary. A small regular force, and a sufficient number of educated and experienced officers, may always be an expedient to give example and instruction.

I thank you, with a soldier's heart, for your attendance on this occasion; and, on your return to your respective homes, bear with you, and to your families, my best wishes for your prosperity and happiness.

And now, my friends, townsmen, and fellow-citizens, permit me to conclude my part in this interesting drama, by renewing to you all, the sincerest expressions of my deep and heartfelt gratitude.

The procession was then reformed, and the General was escorted to his quarters in First street, where they were dismissed, after six most enthusiastic cheers, answered by the General, who feelingly stood upon his steps, bowing, and waiving his sword, with the deepest emotion.

The occasion throughout was one of the most grand and imposing ever witnessed in this city, and we have not learned that any thing occurred during the day to disturb the universal gratification it created.

STATE SWORD.

RESOLUTIONS, WHICH WERE UNANIMOUSLY PASSED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF NEW YORK.

State of New York,
In Assembly, April 10, 1848.

Resolved, (if the Senate concur,) that the thanks of this Legislature are due, and are hereby tendered to our distinguished fellow citizen, Brigadier General JOHN E. WOOL, for his valor, skill and judicious conduct, conspicuously displayed in organizing and preparing for the service of his Country, with unprecedented rapidity, more than twelve thousand volunteers, in the summer of 1846; in disciplining the column under his command, during a rapid march through an enemy's country—disarming that enemy by his humane and vigilant observance of their rights; in the courage and good conduct displayed in the battle of *Buena Vista;* his uniform gallantry and activity on the field; and the ability and success with which he has since discharged his arduous and responsible duties.

Resolved, (if the Senate concur,) that the Governor be, and he is hereby requested, to procure a sword, with suitable emblems and devices, and present it to *Brigadier General Wool*, in the name of the People of this, his native State, as a testimony of their high appreciation of his services.

Resolved, (if the Senate concur,) that the Governor be, and is hereby requested to cause the foregoing resolutions to be communicated to *Brigadier General Wool*, in such terms as he may deem best calculated to give effect to the purposes thereof.

By order of the Assembly,

P. B. PRINDLE, *Clerk.*

State of New York,

In Senate, April 10, 1848.

Resolved, That the Senate do concur in the foregoing resolutions.

By order of the Senate,

A. H. CALHOUN, *Clerk.*

CIVIC AND MILITARY CEREMONIES OF THE PRESENTATION, IN THE CITY OF ALBANY, N. Y., DECEMBER 30, 1848.

This splendid and imposing ceremony took place on saturday last, at the Capitol; and, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, attracted an immense crowd of spectators, who, during the triumphal procession, as well as at the time of the presentation, vied with each other in giving expression to the unbounded feelings of delight and sympathy, with which they regarded this acknowledgment by the State Legislature, of the services and triumphs, of one of the most illustrious and distinguished heroes of the age.

TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

About half-past ten on the morning of Saturday, the "Troy Citizens' Corps," and the "Troy Artillery," the guard of honor for the day, (preceded by the splendid military band from the United States Arsenal,) marched to the residence of General Wool, in Troy, where they were received by him in the usual military form. The gallant General and his Staff, accompanied by General Cooper and his Staff, with a number of distinguished friends, then proceeded, in elegant sleighs provided for the occasion,

to the capital of the State. The whole scene was animated and picturesque in the extreme. What with the magnificence of the military display—the crowds of admiring spectators who lined the road—the spirit-stirring strains of the martial music—the merry jingle of the bells,—the whole scene was at once novel, dazzling, and exciting in the highest degree. As the gay and gallant *cortege* dashed through the crowded streets of the classic city of his adoption, the General and his friends were greeted by loud and enthusiastic cheers. In about half an hour the cavalcade reached Albany, where it seemed as if the whole population had turned out to do honor to this illustrious warrior. All along State street, the windows were crowded with the beauty and fashion of the city; and the feelings of the fair spectators were expressed with such enthusiasm, as to recall most vividly to our recollection the famous line,

"None but the brave deserve the fair!"

THE PRESENTATION.

Long before the hour appointed, the Executive Chamber, where, as it was a State affair, it was intended the presentation should take place, was thronged with persons eager to examine this splendid testimonial, which was there exhibited to public inspection.

THE SWORD.

The top of the hilt is formed by a liberty cap. On one side of the grip, is a figure of liberty, with a mirror at her feet, reflecting her image upon Mexico; on the other side, is the same figure, with broken chains lying near her. One part of the handle is formed by an eagle, with its feet resting on pearls; and the other, by the Mexican serpent, with a fine ruby in his head. At the junction of these two emblems, is a band of Mexican sacrificial stones. At the top of the scabbard are the arms of the State on a shield.

On the scabbard are numerous allegorical devices, representing war and war scenes; and a lion, the emblem of strength and triumph in a good cause.

In the second division of the obverse of the scabbard, are some etchings, admirably executed, mythologically or hieroglyphically representing the results of war—a chariot of war, followed by birds of prey, and by the angel of death; women and children fleeing before it; with men bearing an infirm parent upon a litter. They approach the figure of justice, who hears their complaint; behind the throne, on which justice is seated, a mother, with her infant, has sheltered herself; and there also, are stationed two officers, ready to obey the commands of justice.

The reverse of the scabbard bears in the first compartment, the following inscription:

PRESENTED TO

MAJ. GEN. JOHN E. WOOL, U. S. A.

By the State of New York, Dec. 30, 1848;

In commemoration of his vigilant and arduous services previous to, and his skill, gallantry and activity, in the hard fought Battles at BUENA VISTA, 22nd, 23rd, Feb'y, 1847, as also his distinguished services throughout the War with MEXICO.

The second compartment is occupied by an engraving, illustrative of the enlistment of the volunteers. A commissary general is furnishing the heroes with clothing, equipments, &c. The whole scene is extremely graphic and striking. A Western steamboat landing, supplies the subject of the next engraving. The volunteers are now embarking for the seat of war. The bustling and lively character of this scene is admirably conveyed in the spirited lines of the artist. The fourth compartment is devoted to an illustration of the famous march of the American troops through the gorges of the Santa Rosa Mountains. In long and brilliant array, the gallant bands of the invading army are seen traversing these rugged

defiles. It was on such a scene that the heroic Colonel Hardin looked back, when he exclaimed.—"God bless you, my countrymen—what is there to fear from any foe, when backed by such a force!" Next appears the camp and battle field of "Buena Vista"—now, another name for American gallantry and military prowess. The famous interview between Taylor and Wool,after the battle, is the subject of the next device. Both generals are dismounted, their chargers held by grooms.

The last illustration is appropriately devoted to that scene, consecrated to the best feelings of our nature, and which sheds a lustre even on the horrors of the field of battle—the Mexican women relieving our dying and wounded soldiery, while our troops are seen ministering to the necessities of the enemy. Those appropriate devices are executed in the finest style, and are creditable in the highest degree to the accomplished artist who designed them. The cost of this suberb weapon is about $2,000.

In order to accommodate the large concourse of people who thronged the broad avenue and the enclosures nearly down to the capitol gate, the ceremonial of presentation took place in the portico of the capitol. Among the distinguished personages assembled, were His Excellency Governor Young and staff; Gen. Cooper and staff; Adjutant General Stevens; Lieut McLean, Aid-de-Camp to Gen. Wool; Hon. M. Fillmore, Vice-President elect of the U. S.; Governor Fish and staff; and a number of officers from the U. S. Arsenal at West Troy, &c., &c.

ADDRESS.

His Excellency Governor Young addressed General Wool as follows:

Sir:—The Legislature of this State, at the last session, —at the instance of one of the most accomplished statesman, of his years,* whom it is my pleasure to know—adopted a series of resolutions declaring, that the thanks of

*Hon. A. K. Hadley.

the Legislature of this state were due, and thereby tendered to Major General JOHN E. WOOL, of the Army of the United States, for his valor, skill and judicious conduct on several memorable occasions, particularly named. The resolutions also instructed the Governor to present to you, in behalf of the people of the State, a sword, to be procured for that purpose, with appropriate devices, in testimony of their high appreciaton of your public services.

I have felt in common with the people of this State, and have participated perhaps as deeply in the public sentiment which has manifested itself in reference to your public services, as any person in the community where I live. I may not now—the laws of society, while addressing you, will not allow me—to borrow the language of eulogy ; but, I trust, I may be permitted to state, that these resolutions were not adopted by a small community—by the citizens of a single city—by an association of personal friends—nor did they come up from any partizan organization. They are the expression of the whole people of this—your native state. That expression was made, irrespective of religious opinions, professions, or faith. That expression was made, irrespective of political distinction, or political organization. It is the full and free expression, allow me to repeat, of the people of this whole State, in the form prescribed by the laws and usages of the country. This expression, then, must be regarded by us—and I trust will not be otherwise regarded by you—as second only in significance, to the expression of this great Nation, through both houses of the Congress of the United States.

The resolutions to which I refer, and under which we now come here, have been restricted in their language to your connection with the Mexican war. But it cannot be assumed that the people of this State, or the Legislature, were forgetful of your eminent services in the late war with Great Britain. The people of the State, in common with the people of the whole country, have seen Capt.

Wool at Queenstown, marking his course with his own blood. They have seen him planting, and among the foremost to plant, a firm step on British soil. They have seen his gallantry, judgment, energy and experience, displayed as well in the plan of attack, as in the work of defence. They have seen Maj. Wool at Plattsburgh, and at Beekmantown, gallantly resisting, with two hundred and fifty men, the whole British line, embracing four thousand regular troops; and they have followed you, in your arduous and eminent public services, through the long interval of peace that succeeded.

The Legislature has chosen for an expression, a later period in your career—the organization and mustering of troops—the collection of an army for a long and arduous march—the course of discipline which, under your experienced eye, gave them the efficiency and steadiness, they exhibited in the field. All this was first, in the recollection and gratitude of the People and Legislature of this State; and I shall not attempt to improve the manner in which this expression is conveyed. But the battle of Buena Vista was the great point to which the public attention was directed. It was as distinguished for its daring and intrepidity, as it was momentous and decisive in its results. It was the great battle of the Continent, if not of the World, and to have participated in any manner in its glory, was to share a fame as lasting and enduring as the Continent itself. To you, the second in command on that glorious field, receiving your orders directly from the distinguished Commander-in-chief; the consciousness that you discharged your whole duty, with an intrepidity and gallantry, that commanded the plaudits of the whole Country, and secured to you the marked approbation of that commander, whose fame rivals even that of the Father of his Country, must of itself, be sufficient to satisfy any, but the most extravagant ambition.

No language that I could employ would present this matter in a stronger light, than to say, that you fought

there—that your services were conspicuous, and effective, in the heat of battle and in the preparations for it—and that they received the marked approbation of the most illustrious General of the Age. In relation to your participation in that and other prominent incidents of the Mexican war, it is sufficient to say—whatever may have been the origin of the war, whatever influences may have operated in producing, or in bringing it to an end—public sentiment has, in one respect, been uniform, unvarying. There has been a general feeling, a strong desire, an irrepressible sentiment—to sustain and fully justify, as well as reward, the services of our brave men in Mexico; and from the conviction, equally general and strong, that the brilliant achievements of this war have done much to elevate our national character, and command for us respect abroad, and inspire confidence at home.

I now, in conformity with the resolutions of the Legislature, present to you the sword procured for this purpose, in the name of the People of this State, and in testimony of their high appreciation of your services to your Country, and of the honor thus reflected upon your native State.

Gen. Wool, evidently affected by the scene and the occasion, replied as follows:

REPLY OF MAJ. GEN. WOOL TO GOVERNOR YOUNG.

Sir:—When a soldier returns from a long and perilous campaign to his home and his fireside, there is, there can be, no solace so grateful to his feelings as the approbation of his fellow citizens. That approbation has been manifested by various modes by different nations. The Jews received the successful soldier, returning from the field of battle, with trump and timbrel, and raised the choral hymn of praise; the Romans, with the decorative wreaths of oak and laurel, with ovations, and with the magnificent triumphal procession; the English, with promotions, medals, peerages and pensions; while the more practical Americans, have preferred to manifest their sense of military merit, by bestowing, generally, swords upon such as

they believe would wear them with honor, and sheath them 'without disgrace.'

In this manner, with other demonstrations, my neighbors and fellow citizens of a city in this vicinity, where I have long had my home, manifested their sense of my services, on my return from Mexico. Perhaps, within the limited sphere of that city, some personal partialities, some feelings of private friendship, might have had an influence on popular sentiment. It was, however, the home greeting, and you, Sir, can readily imagine what were my feelings.

But the unanimous approbation of the great State of New York, as indicated by the votes of its Legislature—a State of which I am proud to say I am a native, and which has ever been my home—in defence of whose frontier I first shed my youthful blood—I confess has filled me with emotions, which, although they open all the genial currents of the heart, sometimes paralyze the tongue, when it would utter the voice of gratitude. I can, therefore, only say, that the approbation of my native State, expressed twice, during my absence in Mexico, through the representatives of the people, is an honor for which I entertain the most profound appreciation. The resolutions first passed by the Legislature, were received soon after the bloody battle of Buena Vista, where so many gallant spirits fell in defence of their country. It was a proud moment to learn that my own State had given me its confidence in advance, and before the news of that battle had reached its Capital. It was the first voice from my country that had reached me in that wild and lonely valley, after the surrounding mountains had echoed the thunder of the battle. It more than compensated for all the hardships and perils I had endured. It was indeed, a proud, but melancholy moment—a moment of mingled pleasure and sadness.—For many who went with me had fallen to rise no more.

Of my services, to which your Excellency has so flatteringly alluded, commencing with the battle of Queenstown, my first essay in arms, and terminating with the campaign in Mexico, it becomes not me to speak. For those in the war of 1812, I must refer to history, and for those more recent—to which allusion has been made in the resolutions of the Legislature, as well as in your Excellency's address—to the reports of the commanding General, and the evidence of those who witnessed my efforts to promote the honor and interest of my country. If in a long military career, whether in peace or war, I have been so fortunate in the discharge of the various and responsible duties confided to me, as to command the approbation of my countrymen, and especially of my native State, my ambition is more than satisfied.

It may not, however, have escaped notice, that censures loud and deep, were lavished on me, in consequence of the rigorous,—denominated by some, tyranical,—discipline, which I enforced upon the volunteers of my command, whose achievements on the field of battle have spread their renown throughout the land. Those who have never experienced the trials and hardships, to which the soldier is exposed in a foreign war, can have little idea of their magnitude. To the inexperienced, the difficulties appear insurmountable; to the undisciplined, they are insupportable. Toil and privation are inevitable. The country invaded must be explored, roads and bridges made, rivers crossed, ravines filled, hills levelled, and supplies for men and animals procured.

If my soldiers endured hardships, I shared them; but they had no share in my responsibilities. If my discipline appeared harsh, or unnecessarily rigorous, it became so from stern necessity. We were in the heart of the enemy's country, beyond the reach of supplies from the United States. I could not forsee the amount of force which might be brought against us, and constant vigilance was requisite; as the slightest relaxation of discipline

might have been followed by the most fatal consequences, and the very existence of my column put at hazard; for at that early day it was reported that General Santa Anna was concentrating, organizing and disciplining a large army to drive us, as he asserted, beyond the Rio Grande if not the Sabine. Depending, in a great measure, upon the people of the country for supplies, it was essential that their good will should be secured. This could only be done by convincing them, that no wrong or injustice was intended. Of this they became convinced, and such supplies as I required and they could obtain, were liberally furnished. To establish this state of things, and in order to preserve the honor of my country, and myself and column from disgrace, severe measures and strict adherence to the rules of discipline, became necessary.

I am, however, proud to say, that in the course of that march of 900 miles, not a drop of human blood was shed, and no injury inflicted upon the inhabitants of the country. It affords me also, great pleasure to say, that many who complained of my severity, have since publicly expressed their gratitude for that discipline, which they frankly acknowledged, saved the honor of the American name, and their own lives and honor, in one of the bloodiest battles ever fought on this continent, and between the races which now hold dominion over North America. It commenced on the birth-day of the Father of his Country; and on the following day the Saxon Norman race,—amidst the direst perils that ever surrounded soldiers, principally volunteers, and in all scarcely numbering 4,600 men, under the command of the illustrious General Taylor,—drove more than 20,000 Mexicans, led on by Santa Anna, the great civil and military chieftain of Mexico, with disgrace from the fields of Buena Vista. A glorious victory, but purchased too dearly, for much precious blood was sacrificed. Yet it was not sacrificed in vain, and posterity will reap the benefit, by emulating the heroic deeds of those who fell on those fields. If the battle had terminated otherwise, and the pass of Angostura had been forced

by the Mexicans, the valley, from Buena Vista to the Rio Grande, would have been saturated with American blood. Death would have numbered its victims by thousands, instead of hundreds.

I accept this splendid Sword, this precious gift which you, Sir, as the organ and Chief Magistrate of the State, have tendered to me in the name of the People, as a token of their estimation of my services, with feelings which you can appreciate, but which I cannot express. I trust it will only be drawn in defence of my country and never sheathed, but with honor.

To your Excellency, for the flattering and complimentary manner, in which you have been pleased to present it, I tender my grateful acknowledgments.

Citizen soldiers—for the honor you have conferred on me this day, and the interest you have manifested on this occasion, please to accept my sincere and hearty thanks. Your fine appearance and martial bearing, bespeak your discipline and instruction. A government supported by a citizen soldiery must be the strongest in the world. As long as you can appear, as on this occasion, and at similar public assemblages, with arms in your hands, the republic will be safe. But if the time should arrive, when the people shall be prohibited the right of keeping and bearing arms, the freedom which we so highly prize, will have departed. Let us cherish then this invaluable privilege—this great conservative feature of our free institutions—which, while it banishes the necessity of large standing armies, renders the Republic invincible.

When the gallant General had closed his modest and eloquent reply, the manifestations of applause were loud and long continued. An elegant *dejeuner* was then served to the guests and their friends, at Congress Hall. After partaking of the good things there provided, the procession returned to Troy in the same order in which it had arrived at the capital; and thus ended the ceremonials of one of the most interesting occasions, commemorative of the recent glorious war in Mexico.

NATIONAL SWORD.

Joint Resolution of Congress.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the thanks of Congress are due, and are hereby tendered, to Brevet Major-General John E. Wool, for his distinguished services in the late war with Mexico; and especially for the skill, enterprise, and courage which distinguished his conduct at the battle of Buena Vista.

Resolved, That the President be requested to cause a sword, with suitable devices, to be presented to General Wool, as a testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of his gallant and judicious conduct on that memorable occasion.

Resolved, That the President be requested to cause a copy of the foregoing resolutions to be transmitted to General Wool.

Approved January 24, 1854.

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE SWORD. COMMENTS OF THE PRESS; AND TESTIMONIALS FROM OFFICERS ATTACHED TO GENERAL WOOL'S COMMAND.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

Executive Department,

September 17th, 1855.

Sir:

I transmit herewith a copy of a joint resolution, passed January 24th, 1854, tendering to you the thanks of Congress for your distinguished services in the late war with Mexico.

By one of the clauses of the resolution, the President is requested to cause a sword, with suitable devices, to be presented to you, as a testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of your gallant and judicious conduct at the battle of Buena Vista.

Desirous of giving full effect to the intentions of Congress, the designs for the sword and its fabrication have been entrusted to artists of approved taste and skill, and its preparation has necessarily been a work of time. But it has been recently completed, and you will receive it at an early day through the War Department.

I perform a grateful task in thus conveying to you, this token of your country's approbation.

Very respectfully,

Your ob't serv't,

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

Brevet Major General JOHN E. WOOL,
U. S. Army.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S LETTER.

Washington, November 26, 1855.

Dear General: Since the President's letter to you in September last, efforts have been made to transmit to your Head Quarters, the sword voted to you by Congress. No such opportunity, however, has yet presented itself; and in view of the risk which would be incurred, and the liability to loss of so valuable a donation on so long a route, it has been thought, that you might prefer to give it a different direction. If such should be your wish, on being notified of the fact, I will take pleasure in communicating it to the Department. Probably the safest course would be to entrust it to one of the express lines. If sent by an officer, he would have his own baggage to attend to, and the risk might therefore be greater.

Very respectfully, and
Sincerely yours,
S. COOPER,
Major General A. G.

JOHN E. WOOL, U. S. A.
Comd'g Dept. of the Pacific,
Benicia, Cal.

GENERAL WOOL'S REPLY.

Benicia, Head Quarters, Pacific Dept.,
San Francisco, 19th January, 1856.

Colonel: The morning I left Vancouver, the 11th instant, for my Head-quarters, I received your communication of the 26th November, 1855, relating to the presentation of the sword voted to me "unanimously" by the last Congress. Your letter seems to bear the impress of authority, yet, I presume it is intended to be private in its character. Whether, or not, I am correct in my conjectures, I can present no other reply, than to refer you to the resolutions of Congress, which are in these words, viz:

"January 3rd, 1854."

"*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of* "*the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That "the thanks of Congress are due, and are hereby tender- "ed, to Brevet Major General JOHN E. WOOL, for his "distinguished services in the late war with Mexico; and "especially for the skill, enterprise, and courage which "distinguished his conduct at the battle of Buena Vista.

"*Resolved*, That the President be requested to cause a "sword, with suitable devices, to be presented to General "WOOL, as a testimonial of the high sense entertained by "Congress of his gallant and judicious conduct on that "memorable occasion.

"*Resolved*, That the President be requested to cause a "copy of the foregoing resolutions to be transmitted to "General WOOL."

With these resolutions before me, I should deem it highly improper for me to dictate in any manner whatever to the President, the way, or mode, the sword should be presented.

I am very respectfully,

Your ob't serv't,

JOHN E. WOOL,

Colonel S. COOPER, *Major General.*

Adjutant General, Washington.

It appears from a letter of the Hon. JEFFERSON DAVIS to the Editor of the *Jackson Mississippian*, dated August 14th, 1857, that General WOOL's suspicions, as above expressed, were well founded; and that the private letter of the Adjutant General of the Army, was written at the dictation of the War Department.

SECRETARY OF WAR'S LETTER.

War Department,
Washington, May 30, 1857.

Sir: On coming into the War Department, I find a sword, which has been prepared for you under a joint resolution of Congress, as a high testimonial of the great services you have rendered your country, particularly upon the ever glorious battle-field of Buena Vista. To a gallant soldier, no higher evidence of public approbation can be awarded. The resolution, itself, has heretofore been transmitted to you by the proper authority, and it now gives me great pleasure to embrace the first opportunity to forward you the sword itself, which I do by a special messenger.

I have the honor to be, General,
With high consideration,
Your very ob't serv't,
JOHN B. FLOYD, Secretary of War.

Maj. Gen. JOHN E. WOOL, Troy, N. Y.

The following is the origin and description of the design of the sword:

The Ordnance Department were called upon by the Secretary of War, the Hon. JEFFERSON DAVIS, to furnish a design for a sword, which Congress proposed to present General WOOL, for his services at the battle of Buena Vista, and Colonel CRAIG devolved the duty on Captain JAMES G. BENTON, of that Corps, who prepared several designs, one of which was adopted, with a slight alteration.

The idea was to prepare a sword which should not be altogether unserviceable, or which could be worn, if necessary, and, at the same time, to be ornamented with appropriate devices.

The ear of corn composing the hilt has no particular significance, further than it was thought to be *unique* and *national.* The eagle and shield, which surmount it, are national emblems, and the name Buena Vista is written on the shield, to convey an idea of the importance of that victory, in a national point of view. The rattlesnake and cactus, which form the guard, are emblems of the Mexican nationality. The bands, to which the rings of the scabbard are fastened, are formed of laurel leaves, emblematic of the glory won by the General on the occasion; and the stars which adorn the lips are expressive of the brevet rank given him for his distinguished services.

Congress appropriated $1,500 for this sword.

GENERAL WOOL'S REPLY.

Head-Quarters, Dept. of the East,

Troy, N. Y., 6th June, 1857.

To the Hon. John B. Floyd, Secretary of War.

Sir: I had the honor to receive by a special messenger —Capt. H. L. Shields—your communication of the 30th ult., with the sword which the Congress of the United States, January, 1854, unanimously requested the President to have made and presented to me as a testimony of the high sense entertained by its members of my conduct in the memorable battle of Buena Vista.

The very gratifying and acceptable manner in which you have been pleased to carry out the unanimous request of Congress, more than compensated for the failure to do so, by your predecessor in the War Department, to whom, it would seem by the letter of the late President, this service was assigned in September, 1855.

For the beautiful token, with the thanks of Congress, so expressive of the high approbation of my countrymen, for the part I acted on the 'glorious battle-field of Buena Vista,' I shall ever feel profoundly grateful. Be assured

that it will only be drawn in defence of our common country, and I trust never sheathed but with honor.

With considerations of the highest respect, I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN E. WOOL.

The *Journal of Commerce*, commenting upon this correspondence, thus recapitulates the public services to which it specially alludes:

Ten years have elapsed since the memorable battle of Buena Vista, to which the resolutions of Congress refer. It was a terrific engagement of two days, the most unequal perhaps that ever was fought on this continent between two organized armies; in which four to five thousand only of Americans, principally volunteers, under General Taylor as first, and Gen. Wool as second in command, overwhelmed and put to flight, more than 20,000 troops under Santa Anna, aided by twenty generals, and embracing the very flower of the Mexican force and the best army Mexico ever raised. To those of our readers who are not familiar with the noble part Gen. Wool bore in the conduct of that battle, and the "large share" of its success which, in the language of Gen. Taylor, is "justly due" to him, it may not be inappropriate on the present occasion to revive a few facts from contemporaneous authorities, for which we are principally indebted to the *Democratic Review* of November, 1851.

GENERAL TAYLOR, in his first report of the battle of Buena Vista, says, February 24, 1847:

I may be permitted here, however, to acknowledge my great obligations to Brigadier-General Wool, the second in command, to whom I feel particularly indebted for his services on this occasion.

Again, in GENERAL TAYLOR'S detailed account of the battle, dated March 6, 1847 he says:

To Brigadier-General Wool my obligations are especially due. The high state of discipline and instruction of

several of the volunteer regiments was attained under his command; and to his vigilance and arduous services before the action, and his gallantry and activity on the field, a large share of our success is justly to be attributed. I beg leave to recommend him to the favorable notice of the government.

The following is an extract from the account given of the battle by MAJOR COFFEE, one of Gen. Taylor's staff;

General Wool led the main body in person, and was seen everywhere rallying and encouraging the volunteers. The details of the battle were confided to General Wool, who nobly justified the confidence of his commander and brother veteran, by the most active, zealous, efficient, and gallant conduct. Throughout the whole action, he was constantly engaged in the disposition of our forces, and in rallying them to the onset. It is a miracle that he escaped the thick flying balls which thinned the ranks he was marshalling. There was but one complaint made against him, and that was, that he exposed himself too much.

TESTIMONIALS FROM OFFICERS.

GENERAL LANE'S LETTER.

Buena Vista, Mexico, May 20, 1847.

Dear General: In a few days we are to take up the line of march homewards and from my understanding of the law, I am soon to be discharged, and I greatly hope that the cause that gave rise to my appointment may soon cease to exist. A speedy and honorable peace with this country is much desired by every American citizen.

But, my dear General, I cannot think of parting with you without expressing my high opinion of your great worth as a military man. During the whole time that I have been under your command, I have found you prompt, faithful and vigilant in the discharge of your duty; looking alone to the good of the service, and the honor and glory of your country.

A strict disciplinarian, you have discharged your duty with ability, and an impartiality worthy a great man. Your exertion, as second in command, at the great and glorious battle of Buena Vista, moving to and fro in any part of the field, watching the movements of the enemy, exposed to danger almost every moment of the day, ordering and disposing of our forces in the best manner, to meet and repulse the enemy—by your exertions, coolness and courage in gaining this victory, you have won laurels and a fame, that will endure as long as the traces of American history shall exist.

Hoping that you may live long to enjoy the thanks of a great people, I remain, sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant

JOSEPH LANE, Brig. Gen.

The ILLINOIS VOLUNTEERS wrote to General Wool, as follows:

BRAZOS SANTIAGO, June 23, 1847.

Brigadier General Wool: The officers and soldiers of the first regiment Illinois volunteers, on the eve of leaving Mexico for their homes, would do violence to their feelings did they not tender to their immediate commanding general a testimonial of their regard. Upon entering the service a year since, they were not prepared to appreciate the importance of discipline and drill, and consequently complained of them as onerous and unnecessary —complaints were loud and many.

Their judgment convinced, these feelings have undergone a change, and they now thank you for your untiring exertions to make them useful to their country and a credit to the state.

Whatever, sir, of service, we may have done our common country, or whatever of honor we may have done the state of Illinois, to General J. E. Wool is due the credit. You, sir, brought your column into the field well

provided for and disciplined, and fought them well when you got them there; and should our country ever again need our services in the field, it would be our proudest wish to again meet the enemy under the command of one in whose energy, watchfulness and courage, we and the whole army, have the most unlimited confidence.

With the best wishes for your future fame and happiness, on the part of the regiment, we beg leave to subscribe ourselves your friends,

W. Weatherford, Col. 1st Reg. Ill. Vol.
W. B. Warren, Lieutenant Colonel,
And forty company and staff officers.

In relation to General Wool's conduct in the battle of Buena Vista, Lieutenant Colonel J. S. Roane, of the Arkansas Volunteer Cavalry, says in his report:

On the morning of the 23d, the position of my command was designated by our gallant General himself, to whose cool and heroic courage, military judgment and commanding genius, I would add my humble testimony.

Major A. F. Morrison, of the Illinois' volunteers, in a letter to his Excellency Governor Whitcomb, relating to the battle of Buena Vista, says that—

General Wool was next in command, and most diligently and valiantly, attended to every department of the engagement. He is a brave and competent officer, and merits the gratitude of his countrymen for his services on this great occasion.

Captain Pike, a friend of General Taylor, in his sketch of the battle, says:

General Wool has gained great credit. He made all the dispositions for the battle. He was cool, calm and composed, and exhibited the most quiet and unpretending bravery.

CARLETON, in his work on the battle of Buena Vista, says:

Wherever the fury of the battle was greatest, there was General Wool, riding from point to point, encouraging and stimulating the men to still greater exertions.

COLONEL JEFFERSON DAVIS, late Secretary of War, in acknowledging the receipt of a letter addressed to General Gibson, relating to General Taylor, from General Wool, wrote to the latter as follows:

SALTILLO, 25th March, 1847.

My dear General: I have just read with great pleasure the copy of your letter to Gen. Gibson, which you did me the honor to send me this morning.

It shall be preserved for the use permitted, and be assured, under circumstances requiring, that it will give me great pleasure thus to apply it.

In these times of petty jealousy and ignoble strife for public approbation, it is quite refreshing to see one so prominent in the scenes you describe, forgetting himself to sustain and commend his commander.

With assurances of my regard,
I am cordially yours,
JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COLONEL BISSELL'S LETTER.

Saltillo, Mexico.

June 15, 1847.

Gen'l JOHN E. WOOL.

Dear Sir: My term of service having nearly expired, I am about to start, as you are aware, for home. Before doing so, however, I desire to convey to you an assurance of the very high estimation in which you are held, as a man and an officer, not by myself alone, but by the officers and men, generally, of the second Regiment of Illinois Volunteers.

Whatever little dissatisfaction may have existed among the men of that regiment early in our compaign, in consequence of what was deemed your severe and rigid discipline, had its origin in ignorance on their part of what was really necessary to qualify men to act the part of soldiers, when in the face of an enemy and under an enemy's fire.

The battle of Buena Vista, in which you so signally distinguished yourself, has undeceived them; and there is, probably not one among them now who does not approve your entire conduct. And their anxiety to do you full justice now, is manifested in every possible way, in which they can give expression to such a desire. They are satisfied with their own achievements on that bloody field, and they fully realize that to your patient and persevering efforts to make them *soldiers*, are they indebted for that success which finally crowned their efforts. They witnessed and appreciated your conduct on that occasion. They saw you wherever duty required your presence throughout the day, without regard to danger or personal consequences; and they are proud to claim you as their commander. In saying this I but do them justice.

It is unnecessary to add that my own views and feelings fully accord with theirs. Indeed, I feel myself peculiarly fortunate in having been, from the first, under your immediate command. Your watchfulness, diligence, sleepless industry and patient attention to the wants and requirements of your command, had prepared me, early, to expect that from you, on the battle-field, which so proudly signalized your conduct at Buena Vista. Your selection of that ground as the trial-field—your sagacity, promptness and energy on the day of battle were precisely what your previous conduct had prepared us to expect.

May the country long enjoy your services, and ever realize them as we, who are here with you, ever will.

Very truly your friend,
and ob't ser't,
WM. H. BISSELL.

COLONEL CURTIS' LETTER.

State of Coahuila, Mexico,
Head Quarters, Saltillo,
June 23rd, 1847.

Brig'r General JOHN E. WOOL.

Sir: Since you mustered me into the service at Cincinnati, the term for which I volunteered has fully expired. The foe, which last week was advancing against you, has recoiled before meeting the firm resistance you had promptly prepared for him; and he is again retreating in terror before you.

There being no present prospect of battle here, and no sufficient force to follow in pursuit, I regard it as a favorable time for me to retire from duty and ask a discharge from the service of the United States.

On leaving the service, allow me General to thank you for the kind reception and attention you gave to the Ohio Volunteers, and the distinguished confidence and numerous acts of kindness you have shown me. The toil, privations, and dangers of war are associated with some agreeable reminiscences, and I shall always look back with pride and pleasure on the humble services I have performed, under a General qualified for the highest station, since he has shown himself, on all occasions, distinguished for coolness, courage, and caution; three attributes rarely combined, but cardinal points in a military commander.

Hoping that you may long continue to add brilliancy to your own fame, and glory to your country; I wish you continued health, and a safe and early return to your friends and family.

Very respectfully,
Your ob't ser't,
SAMUEL R. CURTIS,
Col. 3d Reg't O. V.
Commanding Saltillo.

BRIGADIER GENERAL CUSHING'S LETTER.

Buena Vista, Aug. 20th, 1847.

General: I have received with most grateful emotions your letter of this date.

I shall never cease to esteem it as one of the most fortunate incidents of my life to have been placed, though but for so short a period of time, under your command, and in such relation to it, as to afford me the means of observing, and learning to follow, the rules of discipline and principles of military administration, which direct your conduct as the chief of an army. As a school of instruction in one of the highest departments of human knowledge, it has been of inappreciable value to me. And the careful study of the orders governing your long and successful march from La Vaca, while it has added to the exalted respect I previously entertained for your military character, and to my admiration of that most ably conducted expedition, has laid before me a model of its class. I cannot aspire to any such pre-eminent honor as you have won on the glorious field of Buena Vista, and which nothing but the combination of high capacity, with long experience in every branch of military art, could have enabled you to achieve; but, if I continue in the service, I will at least endeavor to show you, that your instructions were not thrown away on a barren soil. And, in whatever future vicissitudes of fortune, I beg to assure you that you will never fail to find in me an attached and grateful friend.

I am
With great respect,
Your ob't ser't
C. CUSHING.

GEN. WOOL.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF THE HON. DANIEL WEBSTER TO GENERAL WOOL:

Washington, April 7th, 1847.

My Dear Gen'l;

Your conduct, and success, at the ever memorable battle of Buena Vista have filled your friends with joy and gladness. They knew that nothing was wanting, in order for your distinguishing yourself greatly, but an opportunity; and happily that opportunity came. All the letters from the Army, as well as Gen'l Taylor's despatch, do you ample justice. I have not heard a dissenting voice. Persons have been here, also, who were in the field, and who speak of your gallantry and good conduct, in the highest terms. It is understood that the arrangements of the details of the battle were left to you, and that it was executed with singular skill and judgment.

I hope you believe, My Dear General, that none of your friends enjoy greater pleasure than myself in seeing you wearing new laurels. Few have known you longer, and none regard you more.

* * * * *

I am, Dear Gen'l, yours truly,

DAN'L WEBSTER.

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